

CLAIMS

We claim:

1. A method of correlating a purchaser of an electronically-purchased item ("EPI") with the EPI, said EPI to be subsequently received by said purchaser, comprising:

a purchasing step, wherein purchaser-related financial and digital certificate information is transferred to a seller of said EPI and verification-related digital certificate information is transferred to said purchaser; and

a verification step, wherein said purchaser and said EPI are correlated by requiring said purchaser to provide said verification-related digital certificate information before receiving said EPI and by electronically comparing said verification-related digital certificate information with said EPI.

2. The method as set forth in claim 1, wherein said purchasing step includes at least the steps of:

creating an electronically-readable indicia corresponding to said verification-related digital certificate information; and

associating said electronically-readable indicia with said EPI.

3. The method as set forth in claim 2, wherein said verification step comprises:

2 electronically reading said verification-related digital certificate information from
3 said electronically-readable indicia into a verification system prior to receiving said EPI;
4 and

5 comparing said read verification-related digital certificate information with 112
6 verification-related digital certificate information provided by a person attempting to
receive the EPI.

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1 7. The method as set forth in claim 4, wherein said digital certificate
2 information comprises an encrypted data file containing personal data pertaining to said
3 purchaser and data pertaining to said EPI.

1 8. The method as set forth in claim 4, wherein said purchaser-related digital
2 certificate information is provided by data stored on a smart card.

1 9. The method as set forth in claim 4, wherein said purchaser-related digital
2 certificate information is supplied from data stored on a PDA.

1 10. The method as set forth in claim 4, wherein said purchaser-related information
2 is supplied from data stored on a cellular telephone.

1 11. The method as set forth in claim 2, wherein said electronically-readable indicia
2 comprises bar coding.

1 12. A method of correlating a purchased item to be picked up by a purchaser with
2 the purchaser of the item, comprising the steps of:
3 transferring indicia of verification-related digital certificate information to the
4 purchased item;

5 requiring said purchaser to present said verification-related digital certificate
6 information upon picking up said item; and

7 correlating said purchased item with the purchaser of the item by electronically
8 comparing said verification-related digital certificate information presented by said
9 purchaser with said indicia.

13. A method of correlating a purchased redeemable ticket (PRD) with the
2 purchaser of the redeemable ticket, comprising:

3 a purchasing step, wherein purchaser-related financial and digital certificate
4 information is transferred to a seller of said PRD and verification-related digital certificate
5 information is transferred to said purchaser; and

6 a verification step, wherein said purchaser and said PRD are correlated by requiring
7 said purchaser to provide said verification-related digital certificate information before
8 receiving said PRD and by electronically comparing said verification-related digital
9 certificate information with said PRD.

1 14. The method as set forth in claim 13, wherein said purchasing step includes
2 at least the steps of:

3 creating an electronically-readable indicia corresponding to said verification-related
4 digital certificate information; and

5 associating said electronically-readable indicia with said PRD.

1 15. The method as set forth in claim 14, wherein said verification step comprises:
2 electronically reading said verification-related digital certificate information from
3 said electronically-readable indicia into a verification system prior to receiving said PRD;
4 and

5 comparing said read verification-related digital certificate information with
6 verification-related digital certificate information provided by a person attempting to
7 receive the PRD.

8 16. The method as set forth in claim 15, wherein the PRD is authorized to be
9 released to said person attempting to receive the PRD only after the PRD is confirmed to
10 have associated therewith verification-related digital certificate information corresponding
11 to the verification-related digital certificate information provided by said receiving party.

12 17. The method as set forth in claim 16, wherein said verification-related digital
13 certificate information comprises an encrypted data file containing personal data pertaining
14 to said purchaser.

1 18. The method as set forth in claim 16, wherein said verification-related digital
2 certificate information comprises a data file containing encrypted data pertaining to said
3 PRD.

1 19. The method as set forth in claim 16, wherein said digital certificate
2 information comprises an encrypted data file containing personal data pertaining to said
3 purchaser and data pertaining to said PRD.

1 20. The method as set forth in claim 16, wherein said purchaser-related digital
2 certificate information is provided by data stored on a smart card.

1 21. The method as set forth in claim 16, wherein said purchaser-related digital
2 certificate information is supplied from data stored on a PDA.

1 22. The method as set forth in claim 16, wherein said purchaser-related information
2 is supplied from data stored on a cellular telephone.

1 23. The method as set forth in claim 13, wherein said electronically-readable
2 indicia comprises bar coding.